

Green Tea FACT Sheet

Scientific Name: Camilia sinensis

Common Name: Green Tea

Best-Selling Brands: There are many, many brands sold in supermarkets as well as ethnic and health food stores.

Historical Perspective: Green tea leaf and its extracts has been used in China for thousands of years. It is used to treat a variety of maladies, to include dizziness, headache and indigestion.

Common Uses: Green tea is claimed to help in the prevention of atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries), cancer, cavities and high cholesterol. It is also promoted as an antibacterial agent, astringent, diuretic, radioprotective agent and a stimulant.

Investigational Uses: Studies have been done with green tea for cancer prevention, cholesterol lowering, as an antibacterial agent, for its antiplatelet effects (blood thinning) and for decreasing cavities (because of its fluoride and tannin content).

Form(s) Used: Green tea is usually "taken" in the tea form; however, there are capsules of green tea as well.

Common and/or Recommended Dosage: Green tea is usually consumed by drinking, although capsules are available. Six to ten cups a day is the recommended dose for therapeutic effects.

Average Cost per Day at Common/Recommended Dosage: \$4.10-\$6.31 a day (depending on the brand you choose, Green tea is as inexpensive as .83-\$1.39 for six to ten cups a day).

Potential Side Effects: Allergic reactions for those with green tea asthma. Green tea does have caffeine, so large amounts may cause restlessness, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or constipation, heart palpitations and headache. For those with a sensitive stomach, green tea may cause stomach irritation and poor appetite.

Food Drug Interactions: Green tea is a good source of vitamin K, so anyone taking Coumadin or Warfarin (blood thinners) should consult a health care provider; vitamin K antagonizes the effect of these medications. Green tea also interacts with Doxorubicin and alkaline medications (consult your health care provider). If green tea is consumed with milk, the antioxidant effects may be diminished.

Contraindication to Use: Green tea should be used cautiously by those who have a weak heart, kidney disease, an overactive thyroid, a susceptibility to spasms or prone to anxiety or panic attacks. In addition, because caffeine should be restricted during pregnancy and breastfeeding, consumption of green tea during these times should be moderate.

Research Data on Safety and Efficacy: Green tea has antioxidant properties, which is one of the ways that green tea may be protective of heart disease. Other studies show that consuming green tea may also be helpful for reducing the risk for some forms of cancer. Research continues in both of these areas. Studies testing green tea's antibacterial properties are also promising.

Bottom-Line: Green tea is very safe.

References:

1. *Professional's Handbook of Complementary and Alternative Medicines.* C.W. Fetrow, PharmD, Juan R. Avila, PharmD, Springhouse, 2001.
2. *The Health Professional's Guide to Popular Dietary Supplements.* Allison Sarubin, MS, RD. The American Dietetic Association, 2000.
3. <http://my.webmd.com>